

## **Resources for Partner Organizations**

Political education may begin in the classroom, but by no means does it end there. Partner organizations can play a crucial role in civic education by exposing students to resources and experiences not typically available in the classroom. While the opportunities for cooperation between schools and organizations are endless, here are a few project ideas that outside organizations could help facilitate.

### **Mock Election:**

First, talk with representatives from your local school about whether they think it's appropriate to use real candidates or whether they would prefer fictional alternates. Next, create a list of issues important to the race. Depending on the amount of time the school would like to devote to the event, students can either be provided with each candidate's stance on these issues, or research them independently. Third, determine a voter registration system, emphasizing the necessity of pre-registering for elections. And, finally, host an Election Day.

*Useful resources:*

Election vocabulary- <http://election.scholastic.com/election-central/vocabulary/>

Step-by-step guide to running a mock election-  
[http://www.elections.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/837791/SchoolElections.pdf](http://www.elections.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/837791/SchoolElections.pdf)

Connecticut-specific video series on the importance of voting-  
<http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/civics/Your%20Vote%20-%20Where%20Democracy%20Begins.asp>

CT Senators by District- <http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/civics/legislators.asp?chamber=senate>

CT Representatives by District- <http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/civics/legislators.asp?chamber=house>

### **Mock Debate:**

It's key to emphasize the importance of civil political discourse, and to teach students how to go about discussing potentially sensitive, but significant, political issues. A great way to enact these ideas is to host a mock debate. Students will research issues, write persuasively, and discuss constructively with their peers. Again, as an organization outside of the school system, talk with your local school about the issues they deem appropriate and whether they would like a candidate, real or fictitious, attached to those issues.

*Useful resources:*

Staging debates for K-5- [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/lesson/lesson304.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson304.shtml)

Formal debate format-

<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwic4cXVn-TNAhXDcD4KHWMfAXYQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fedweb.tusd1.org%2Fgmitchell%2FDebate%2520-%2520Student%2520Handout.doc&usg=AFQjCNGoSqorlT1if4qzcRsJ6kIH2tHLHQ>

Constructing Positive Civil Discourse- <http://www.tolerance.org/publication/chapter-1-civil-discourse-classroom-and-beyond>

List of political debate topics (free log-in required)- <https://thinkcerca.com/presidential-debate-resources/>

### **Guest Speaker:**

Partner organizations often have members with important political or subject matter experience, and have connections to individuals with said experience. Sharing this unique perspective and wisdom with students can be a formative, worthwhile event. Just an hour-long talk can provide educators and students with a wealth of new areas to explore and potential topics to research. Once again, be sure to keep communication open and honest with the host school, discuss topics and presentation materials beforehand. Below is a list of possible presentation topics.

- Campaign experience
- Environmental issues
- Civil discourse
- Election officiating
- Media influence
- Civil rights
- Data collection
- Foreign policy

### **Field Trip/Volunteer Opportunities:**

Field trips and volunteer hours can excite students' imaginations, reinvigorate them in their studies, and increase their likelihood of being civically involved in the future. Below are a few ideas of potential destinations. Community organizations can assist schools by sponsoring a field trip or to organize a volunteer outing. While field trips can be a bit more difficult to organize and often require additional funding, providing students with real-world experiences is a key part of the education process.

- The Capitol
- Local Town Hall
- Republican and Democratic party headquarters (as long as both are visited)
- City Council meetings